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MEMORIAL LINES.

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"Arise! let our banner be flung to the skies!
See, the northern battalions are roused to the fight!
The echoing mountains shall wake to our cries;
Our country and liberty! God and the right!"

Memorial Lines

For the Corner Stone of the Michigan Soldiers' Home.

By Col. SAMUEL WELLS, Manager.

To countless ages, now unknown,
I dedicate my humble rhyme,
And place it in this corner stone,
To be revealed in future time.

My theme is freedom's sacred war,
And ghastly treason's bloody hand;
Of red rebellion's crimson star,
Which dawned upon our native land.

And of those legions from the North
(Defenders of their country's life)
Who, when the call "to arms!" went forth,
They bared their breasts to mortal strife.

Long years ago, our fathers planned—
A temple ; whose chief corner stone
Was "Liberty throughout the land",
And Freedom crowned its glittering dome.

They, its foundation walls did build,
With thirteen ashlers, now called States ;
Cemented with the blood they spilled
To crush oppressions' cruel hates.

Upon the temple's walls and dome,
Our fathers worked through doubts and fears ;
And by the sword, they gained a home
For freedom's sons in future years.

They then did build a triune throne
Where Freedom's goddess they did seat
Justice stood trembling, all alone,
And Liberty kissed Freedom's feet.

Within the temple's sacred wall ,
Our institutions then did rise ;
Like polished columns broad and tall,
To gild the arch of Freedom's skies.

Those columns represent some creed
Based on religion, art, or law;
Science and learning all agreed,
Would make oppression humbly bow.

Each of these columns have a name,
Carved by Jehovah's own right hand;
Excepting one; whose curs-ed fame
Brought chains and slavery to our land.

This mildewed, sable column stood
Where winter's sun gilds southern clime;
A monument to Slavery's god,
A blot upon the page of time.

It flourished; and when years rolled by,
Outstripped in height our nation's dome;
And cast its shadows o'er the sky—
Of Liberty and Freedom's home.

Treason was carved upon its face,
The yoke of bondage on its brow;
The lash and chain its hands did grace,
And on its scroll,—oppression's vow.

Before one century's sun had set,
Slavery had covered half the land ;
And traitor's men our patriots met
In halls of state with loud demand—

Claiming the exclusive right,
Of each and every sov'reign State ;
To hold in bondage and by might
Rivet the chains of Slavery's hate,—

On human chattels, who were born
Beneath the stars of Freedom's skies ;
A servile race with hope forlorn
Lie bleeding while those traitorous eyes—

With a Satanic gleam look down,
In scornful vengeance and delight ;
Darting forth a withering frown
On Afric's tawny sons of night.

Traitors lay coiled neath Southern skies,
Like serpents in their slimy den ;
Until Jeff Davis cried "Arise !
To arms, ye *Lords* and noble men—

Rebellion's standard is unfurled :
We'll slavery spread, despite the North ;
Our rights they'll heed throughout the world,
Sons of the South ! come forth ! come forth !"

The snakes of state from far and near,
Who long had waited for the call,
Went forth as heralds, without fear,
And met in treason's mildewed hall.

A child was born within that hall,
"Secession" was its traitorous name ;
Conceived by Satan's sullen call,
'Twas born a demon bold—insane.

This child Secession, they did crown,
A goddess o'er vile Slavery's clan ;
Statesmen and doctors of renown,
Placed this red demon in the van.

While all arch-traitors in the South,
Belched forth their venom o'er the land ;
Like poison blown from adder's mouth,
Vengeance went forth from every hand.

* * * * * *

Rebellion's storm was gath'ring fast,
When Abraham Lincoln grasped the helm,
To guide our ship before the blast,
And by his courage save our realm.

When clouds of war obscured the sun,
And peace conventions all had failed;
In eighteen hundred sixty-one,
Our flag in southern dust was trailed.

The war snakes of secession's land,
From mountain top and vale poured forth;
To meet with Charleston's hostile band,
And slay our patriots from the north.

Like impious demons they decree,
The banishment of Freedom's clause—
From Southern clime by land and sea,
And sever all our nation's laws.

Bold Anderson now holds the gate
Twixt Charleston's heights and ocean tide;
And Beauregard with bitter hate,
Fired the first gun at Sumpter's side.

The echoes of that fatal gun,
Reached every northern, loyal State,
From rock-bound Maine to setting sun,
At California's "golden gate."

When Sumpter's crumbling walls went down,
Dark were the stars in Freedom's skies;
Until Rebellion's crimson frown,
Vanished with Slavery's groans and cries.

A cry was heard throughout the North—
"To arms, ye patriot sons of light!
Gird on your armor; and go forth—
To slay secession by thy might."

Men left the shop; the store; the plow;
The woodsmen left their haunts so dear;
Trusting in God, all took the vow
To serve their country without fear.

The songs of war soon fanned the flame
Of Liberty throughout the land;
And from war's slumbering embers came
The fires of vengeance, bright and grand.

We formed the armies of the North,
Midst clattering drum and screaming fife ;
With glittering arms we then went forth,
To battle for our nation's life.

In strife and toil, four years were spent,
Upon rebellion's fiery sea ;
From field to field in arms we went,
Until Ulysses conquered Lee.

On Appomattox' bloody plain
Secessions' last expiring breath—
Gave Freedom to the world again,
And Slavery's cries were hushed in death.

That peace which dawned upon our land
Was purified by fire and sword.
But, when the loving, tender hand
Of mercy, wrote the golden word—

Which pardoned those, whose trait'rous breath
Poisons the mind of church and state ;
It opened wide the gates of death,—
To tranquil Peace, and doomed its fate.

* * * * * *

One quarter century's passed away,
Since Sumpter fell by Southern foe ;
In Congress hall they've gained the day,
And rule the realm where're they go.

Jeff. Davis with his leprous skin,
Has risen from his slumb'ring den ;
He, the arch-traitor ; heir of sin ;
Is worshipped by rebellious men.

They soon will claim Secession's right,
And ask us to—apologize
For even offering to fight,
Against State rights and Slavery's cries.

Is the time drawing near at hand
When their lost cause shall be regained
By ballots from our northern land ?
Then loyalty will be defamed.

Grand Rapids, Mich., May 31, 1886.

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